

Instructional Activities and Strategies Supporting Fluency

Instructional Activities

- **Repeated Reading**

Unassisted:

1. Students are given short reading passages that contain words generally recognizable to students. Passage length should be between 50 and 300 words. Passages can be taken from many different types of reading materials and should be at the student's independent level.
2. Students orally read the passage several times until a predetermined level of fluency or reading rate is attained (e.g., 95 words per minute). Students may be involved in recording and charting their own progress.
3. In other cases, students are expected to orally read the passage for a certain number of repetitions. Most studies suggest students benefit from orally reading the passage three to five times.
4. After students have reached criterion, they start the process over with another piece of text.

Assisted:

1. The teacher models fluent reading of the selected passage, then discusses new vocabulary and content with the students.
2. The class practices the text as a whole group.
3. Students practice the passage independently until they have reached the desired criterion or have read the passages a specified number of times.

- **Partner Reading**

In partner reading, students take turns reading aloud to each other. Students are divided into pairs. Each student reads a short passage three times and then provides feedback about their own and their partner's oral fluent reading behaviors. For partner reading, partners can have the same reading ability or partnerships can include a more fluent reader with a less fluent reader. Many types of reading materials can be used, such as passages from basal readers, student produced stories, and trade books (Koskinen & Blum, 1986).

- **Choral Reading**

In choral, or unison, reading, students read along as a group with you (or another fluent adult reader). Of course, to do so, students must be able to see the same text that you are reading. They might follow along as you read from a big book, or they might read from their own copy of the book you are reading. For choral reading, choose a book that is not too long and that you think is at the independent reading level of most students. Patterned or predictable books are particularly useful for choral reading, because their repetitious style invites students to join in. Begin by reading the book aloud as



you model fluent reading. Then reread the book and invite students to join in as they recognize the words you are reading. Continue reading the book, encouraging students to read along as they are able. Students should read the book with you three to five times total (though not necessarily on the same day). At this time, students should be able to read the text independently (National Institute for Literacy, 2001).

- **Readers Theatre**

Readers Theatre is an interpretive activity in which readers use their voices to bring characters to life. It requires no sets, costumes, props, or memorized lines. The performer's goal is to read a script aloud effectively, enabling the audience to visualize the actions. Besides the characters, the narrator has an important role in Readers Theatre. The narrator provides the details and explanations, which can be found in the original text's narration, descriptions, or even illustrations. Texts need to be within the reader's reach, however, students can participate in challenging text if their parts are within their reach. Stories with straightforward plots and strong characters, with dilemmas requiring thought and talk, can be easily turned into scripts (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1988).

Strategies

- **Explicit Instruction**

Explicit instruction provides teachers with a lesson structure for explaining and demonstrating the application of reading concepts, processes, skills, and strategies that are invisible to many students. It also provides a structure for coaching students to a high level of performance and cognitive control with these essential tools of proficient readers. Some students will have discovered these and become very proficient in their use. For other students, strategies such as using sight words and knowledge of how onsets and rimes work to decode unfamiliar words, or mining the full text as they gather information about the meaning of an unfamiliar word, will be new content. One of the major instructional purposes for using explicit instruction is to model and explain how reading works. Of course, our long term goal is for students to apply the targeted concept, process, skill, or strategy appropriately and automatically in real reading situations and to know how and why it works for them.

References

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- Martinez, M., Roser, N.L., & Strecker, S. (1998–1999, December–January). 'I never thought I could be a star': A readers theatre ticket to fluency. *The Reading Teacher*, 54(2), 326–334.
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